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A

Familiar and Serious

ADDRESS,

TO THE

Freeholders and *Electors*

IN

IRELAND,

By a Friend of the Public.

DUBLIN:

Printed by A. STUART, in St. Audeon-arch, 1775.

(*Price*, Six-pence.)

BRITISH MUSEUM

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A

Familiar and Serious

ADDRESS, &c.

Fellow-Subjects and Freeholders,

THE Time is now approaching---near at Hand, when we ſhall be called to chooſe the Perſons who ſhall again repreſent us in Parliament.——

Many there are, I am afraid, to whom this Privilege is given by Law, who do not *at all* conſider its Importance,——and therefore, either *out of Compliment*, or *from ſiniſter Views*,

Views, throw away their Votes, without ever attending to the Conſequences.

To prevent this, and to perſuade you to act as becomes SONS OF UNDERSTANDING AND FREEDOM, actuated by a generous Love of your Country is the Deſign of the preſent Addreſs.——

For this purpoſe permit me to remind you:

I. That this is an *honourable* Privilege. The *Houſe of Commons* is an eſſential Branch of the Legiſlature; and *to you* the moſt important---becauſe in *its* Hand your Intereſts *principally* lie. To inveſt you with a Power of chooſing the Members of this Houſe, therefore brings you forth to View---it makes you riſe to real Importance in the State---it gives you a Share in forming the Legiſlature of your Country.

It ſerves alſo to remind the Members of that

that Houſe, That, however elevated their Station may be, they are only *Miniſters of the Publick, your Servants*, indebted to you for Power---dependent upon you for the Continuation of it---and therefore bound to employ it for your Advantage.

Now, though the Legiſlature has ſtamped upon you ſuch Importance, will ye ſuffer yourſelves to ſink into Nothing-----to be treated as Cyphers------to be paſſed over with neglect---or with Marks of inſolent ſcorn to be bullied by ambitious Men, who wiſh only to aggrandize themſelves upon the Ruin of your Liberties? I hope better Things of you---Forbid it Pride.———

If many of you cannot vie with them in Fortune, and Grandeur, is there not the greater Reaſon you ſhould preſerve the real Importance ye have?---Step forth therefore, ---Aſſert your Right---cauſe them to know that *to you* they muſt owe their Power---and

for

for you they muſt act, under the Penalty of having it re-called, if perverted. But,

II. This is a Matter of SERIOUS IMPORTANCE. The Conſequences of the Manner in which ye diſpoſe of your Votes, do not reſt with yourſelves. If they did, then indeed, might ye diſpoſe of them as *Friendſhip* or *Intereſt* would direct.

But ſo far is this from being the Caſe, that the whole Community at large is concerned; and Millions, yet unborn, may be affected by it.

The parliamentary Deciſions of the Men we chooſe, are not confined to ourſelves, but extend to the whole Body-Politic: Nor do they terminate with the preſent Generation; but may reach our lateſt Deſcendents.

I ſhould therefore addreſs you upon this Occaſion, as God did Cain:---"If ye do well

" ſhall

"shall ye not be accepted? but if ye do "not well, Sin lieth at the Door." *

If ye impartially ſtudy, not your own private Intereſt, but *that* of the Community to which ye belong, and uninfluenced by low mercenary Motives endeavour to make a prudent Choice; calling forth Men to repreſent you, who will be actuated by a Senſe of Juſtice, and Regard to the *Common Weal*, yourſelves---the Nation in general, may feel the happy Effects, and Generations yet unborn may bleſs your Memory.

And is not this a pleaſing Idea? Is it not an Object of Deſire? How glorious is it to promote the Public Good!---and even to attempt to hand down to Poſterity, *Freedom*, that nobleſt Gift of Heaven!

What a generous, and emulous Warmth

* Gen. 4. 7.

may it raiſe in the Veins of ſucceeding Generations when, in the Annals of their Country, they read the noble Stand which you, their Forefathers made, when Corruption was ſpreading like a Torrent, and the Liberty of Elections ſported with by many in Power!

But if, on the contrary, from Inconſideration, Cowardice, or ſelfiſh Motives, ye appoint to this high Truſt Men, who, from Ambition, Avarice, or ſome other ſordid Conſideration will *play Booty* with both your *Privilges* and *Property*, will ye not incur a conſiderable Degree of Guilt? Muſt not *Yourſelves,---the whole Nation,*---and perhaps, remoteſt Poſterity feel the galling Effects?

In this Caſe how ſhall ye be able to anſwer to your own Conſcience?---To your Fellow-Subjects?---and thoſe who yet unborn may be made to groan under the Chains of Slavery and Oppreſſion entailed on them *virtually* by your Hands? Will

Will not the united Reproaches of your own Minds----of an injured Country----and of ſucceeding Ages, ſpoiled, and enſlaved by your voluntary Miſchoice cover you with Shame, and with Confuſion?

However ſlightly Perſons may think of it, at that tremendous Period when we muſt give an Account of all the Deeds done in the Body, we muſt all render an Account for the Part we act in this Matter.

No Action in Life is in its Nature, indifferent; much leſs an Action which may materially affect millions.

This, *My Countrymen*, is an important Truſt repoſed in us---We are only Stewards of this Privilege, for ourſelves, the Public, and Poſterity; and "of Stewards, you know, "it is required that they be found faithful." But if inſtead acting with Fidelity, according to the beſt of our Judgment, from ſordid Motives we give our Votes, and exert our

Influence in favour of Men, who, we have reaſon to believe, will be unfaithful to the Public, are we not guilty of an Act of complicated Injuſtice? And ſhall we not be obliged ſeverely to account for it under the Adminiſtration of HIM who has declared, That he will render to every one according to his Works?

For my Part, I ſhudder at the very Thought of the Account which many will have to give for the Part they act in this important Matter; when I ſee them, without regard to Merit, merely from perſonal and ſelfiſh Attachments uſing all the Influence in their Power in Favor of Men who have done much Diſſervice to their Country ---who have proved rather a Curſe than a Bleſſing to it! But it is not Man's to judge. There is a Tribunal at which they muſt appear, and where they muſt reckon for the Manner in which they employ that Influence which Providence has put in their Power, for the Advantage, not the Deſtruction of their Country.

Country. Would to God they would conſider this ere it be too late, both for themſelves, and the State already ſinking, by Means of the Perfidy, and undue Influence of Self-intereſted Men !

III. Conſider that we were inveſted with this Privilege of chooſing our own Repreſentatives, *purely for our own Advantage.*

As the *Houſe of Commons* is an eſſential Branch of the Legiſlature, ſo, without their Conſent, no Taxes can be impoſed upon us, ---Nay, from them all Taxes muſt originate. Was it not extreamly kind therefore in thoſe who framed our happy Conſtitution to give us the Power of chooſing the Perſons who are to tax us, and without whoſe Conſent not a Sixpence can be taken from us ?

And if any of thoſe whom we chooſe for this purpoſe ſhall prove faithleſs to their Truſt, and conſent to load us with unneceſſary Taxes, has not Government been ſo

ſuper-

ſuperabundantly kind, as to limit the Duration of Parliament, and thereby put it into our Power at the End of every Eight Years, to diſplace them (as we would a Servant that had proved diſhoneſt) and chooſe others more faithful?

But what do theſe conſtitutional, theſe noble Advantages avail us, if, regardleſs of our own Intereſts we, notwithſtanding, knowingly chooſe, yea *re-chooſe* Men who make Merchandize of our Liberties, and load us with Taxes at pleaſure? In this Caſe who are to blame? Not the Legiſlature----Not the perſons we thus chooſe----but principally *ourſelves.*---Why then do we yet find Fault?

But ſome will ſay,---"We are deceived---"they impoſe upon us by fair Promiſes, "and the moſt ſpecious Declarations of the "Uprightneſs of their Intentions?"

This I acknowledge may be a Reaſon why we may be *once* miſtaken. But will it juſtify

tify our chooſing *a ſecond Time* the ſame Perſons? What can be pleaded in excuſe for this? Not Ignorance-- It muſt be ſomething worſe----And in this Caſe do we not give a Sanction to their Conduct? Do we not tell them *virtually*, that they may treat us as they pleaſe? Do we not become Partners with them in their Guilt, and deprive ourſelves even of the Conſolation of complaining? For why ſhould we complain of a Grievance which we ſuffer by our own Conſent?

But perhaps it will be ſaid by others, "We are under ſuch Obligations to the Can-"didates, or their Connections, that we "cannot avoid both voting, and uſing our "Influence for them."

This I acknowledge is the moſt excuſable Ground of Partiality; and were not *private Attachments* to give way to *public Duty*, would be a powerful Motive.---Gratitude is the glory of Man---without it he ceaſeth to be

be ‘ the nobleſt Work of God,’ and degenerates into a deſpicable Wretch.

But GRATITUDE itſelf has its Bounds.---

I am not at Liberty to expreſs my Gratitude for Favours conferred *upon me*, with that which belongs to *another*. As well may I put forth my Hand, and ſteal or rob from *one neighbour*, to diſcharge a Debt which I have contracted *with another*. I may--I ought ---'tis my indiſpenſible Duty to ſhew myſelf grateful by every Method in my Power where the Intereſts of others may not be affected. But to do it at the Expence of the *Public*, or of *any* of my fellow Subjects, ceaſeth to be *Gratitude*, and becometh Injuſtice; conſequently is ſo far from being a Duty, that it is a manifeſt Crime.---

This is preciſely the Caſe in the Matter now under Conſideration; our Votes (as I have already ſhewn) are not properly our own---the Public has a Claim upon us, as it

it is to be affected by the Manner in which we diſpoſe of them.

We ought therefore to conſider, not how we may oblige *this* or *that* Friend?---But how we may moſt effectually ſerve our Country? And if we find that voting for our particular Benefactors inſtead of *promoting*, will in all Probability *injure* the Public Intereſts we ought to conſider ourſelves bound before God, and Conſcience, to withhold our Votes from them, and to give both our Votes and Intereſt, to others, who, we have Reaſon to hope, will ſtudy more to promote the Good of the Country, and look out for ſome other Way of expreſſing our Gratitude leſs expenſive to the *Public*, and our *own Conſciences*.

No one will doubt but Injuſtice to an Individual is puniſhable by Law, both Human and Divine. And can Injuſtice to the Public be leſs criminal? Nay is it not more aggravated, inaſmuch as there are

more Intereſts lodged there---conſequently more Individuals ultimately affected thereby? And ſhall the righteous Governor of the Nations puniſh the *leſſer*, and overlook the *greater* Crime? We cannot ſuppoſe it.

The public is not a common Shipwreck, of which we may ſeize a Part at pleaſure (as many ſeem to ſuppoſe)---but one grand, complicated WHOLE---where the Intereſts of ourſelves, our Friends, and our Brethren by Nature are all lodged, as in a common Stock---To this we are all Debtors---its Claims are ſuperior---every private and perſonal Intereſt ſhould give Way to *that* of this ſacred Whole.---Conſequently to injure the Public, in order to ſerve our particular Friends is ſo far from true Gratitude, that it is public Injuſtice. For tho' we may owe much to *particular Benefactors*, we owe much more to *our Country*.

IV. Conſider farther, That your Votes are ſo abſolutely your own, that no Perſon under

under Heaven has a Right to controul you in this Matter.

The Public indeed (as obſerv'd before) has a Claim upon you---But no Individual.

This is a Truſt committed to yourſelves, for which alone you muſt be accountable. Not the King upon the Throne---not one Man upon Earth has a Right to force you to vote contrary to your Inclinations, and Conſciences.

To attempt it is to aſſail your Liberty---*that Liberty* which is as much ſecured to you by the Laws of your Country, as any part of your property.---'Tis to make an hoſtile Aſſault upon your unalienable Right as Britiſh Subjects.

But perhaps ye will ſay "We dare not "diſoblige our Landlords. If we fly in "their Faces it may be a Loſs both to "ourſelves and our Families."---

As

As this Conſideration is likely to prove a Snare to many, I ſhall conſider it fully.

Landlords, no doubt, have much in their Power---and where they are attentive to the Intereſts of the Tenantry ought to be treated with Deference, and every Mark of juſt Reſpect.

But what right have they to interfere in this Caſe? They know you to be fellow ſubjects---that ye live in a country where ye are *conſtitutionally free*---and particularly *that this very Right* of diſpoſing of your Votes as ye think proper is ſecured to you by the ſame Laws, which ſecure their Eſtates to them.

To ſuppoſe therefore that they would attempt, by force, to controul you in a Matter of ſuch Importance to you, as well as to them, certainly carries along with it an Imputation of a very diſhonourable nature.

But

But admit that there are ſome ſo *illiberal*, ſo *unmanly*, ſuch *Enemies* to conſtitutional Liberty, as to wiſh, nay attempt to build *their Influence* upon the Ruin of *your Privileges*; and in order to aggrandize their power would endeavour to reduce you to a State of mere Vaſſalage, will Ye be ſuch *ſervile Wretches*, ſuch *timid Miſcreants*, as tamely to ſubmit; Will ye proſtitute your Liberty, your Honour, your invaluable Privileges to gratify their Ambition, tho' ye may well know that the only Aim of many of them is to have it in their Power to oppreſs you at pleaſure? Is it poſſible that your Hearts can brook the Thought! Will ye thus ſtain the Honour of your worthy Anceſtors, who fought, who died in Liberty's Cauſe? Will ye then deſerve the Shadow of Liberty? Will ye not richly merit to be proclaimed *Slaves*, and like the Vaſſals in Ruſſia, or the Negroes in the Weſt Indies, to be bought and ſold by the Landlords with their Eſtates? The very thought muſt rouze every indignant

nant Abhorrence in every Breaſt, that has the leaſt Spark of Love to Freedom, eſpecially in a Land where we are made free by the fundamental Laws of the Conſtitution under which we live.

But it will be urged by timid, ſelfiſh Spirits, "If we diſoblige them we cannot ex-"pect a Renewal of our Leaſes—yea we "may lay our Accounts with being har-"raſſed by every Method in their Power."

But if this be an Argument ſufficient to juſtify your voting for them, or at their Requeſt, contrary to your Inclinations, and Conſciences, then ſurely it will alſo juſtify them in ſacrificing your Intereſts to their Ambition, and Avarice. For if ſuch Regard to Self be innocent *in you, in them* it cannot be criminal.

If ye from a Poor, ſordid Regard to your own private Intereſts, give them your Votes, tho' ye know that they are neither men of Religion,

Religion, nor ſuch public Spirit, as is neceſſary for ſo weighty a Truſt; how can ye complain, if they, from the ſame baſe Regard to *ſelf* make Merchandize of both your Liberties, and Properties, bartering them for Titles, Penſions, lucrative Employments, and the like?---

How can ye expect that your Intereſts will be dearer *to them*, than *to yourſelves*? If ye yourſelves knowingly ſacrifice your Privileges to their Ambition, thro' Fear of diſobliging them, and *wilfully* put it into their Power to load you with Taxes at pleaſure; how can ye blame them if, actuated by the ſame Motive, they ſell your Liberties, for whatever will enrich them? For reaſoning in the ſame manner, may they not ſay within themſelves, "We have the "Proſpect of ſuch a Place of Honor---ſuch "a Penſion, or lucrative Employment un-"der Government---but if we diſoblige Ad-"miniſtration---if we refuſe to vote as they "deſire, our Hopes will be fruſtrated."---

Or

Or if already poſſeſſed of theſe, then 'tis natural for them to ſay "We are indebted to Government for theſe. We muſt "therefore concur with them in all their "Meaſures for if we do not, beſides being "accounted ungrateful, we muſt expect to "loſe theſe Honors and Emoluments."

Now upon your own Principles, what Anſwer could ye give to ſuch Reaſoning? None, ſure, that would ſtand the Teſt of common Senſe.

Either therefore diveſt yourſelves of ſuch daſtardly, mercenary Motives, and without ſervile Dread look out for ſuch Men, as, ye have Reaſon to believe, will faithfully ſtudy the Intereſts of the Country, in their Public Character, and ſupport *them*, and them *only* with your Votes, and Influence; or elſe be ſilent, and without murmuring, ſubmit to whatever Burthens they are pleaſed to lay upon you. For whilſt ye your-

ſelves

ſelves are to blame in your Choice, your Complaints ſerve only to expoſe you.

But permit me to tell you, that 'tis this poor, daſtardly, ſelfiſh Spirit in Tenants which emboldens Landlords to proceed to ſuch Extremities as they often do. They ſee that ye are frighten'd at your own Shadows.---They take the Advantage of this---they threaten---and when the *Generality* truckle, encouraged by their cowardly Spirit, they endeavour by every Method in their Power to cruſh the *worthy few*, who have Virtue enough to ſtand out againſt their unreaſonable Claims.

But if with one Heart, and with one Soul, ye would, in a legal, conſtitutional Manner boldly aſſert your Rights, do ye think they would dare to act ſuch a Part? No they would revere you as Men of Underſtanding and Spirit---at leaſt Regard to their own Intereſts, would forbid their proceeding to Severities with you.---Few

Landlords, I apprehend, would be willing to depopulate their Eſtates, merely upon a Diſpute of this Kind, *eſpecially*, at the preſent Juncture; whilſt Tenants are in ſuch an unſettled State, and the Spirit of Emigration ſo much prevailing.---Unanimity therefore, in the Cauſe of your Liberties, as it would be your Honour, ſo, under God, it would be your greateſt Security.

And here, my Brethren, permit me to expoſtulate with you. Shall many complain of Taxes impoſed upon them, and by Methods the moſt Illegal, and Dangerous, look for Redreſs (as in the late unhappy Riſings in this Kingdom) and now when Government itſelf has put it in their power to do themſelves Juſtice, by turning out of Office thoſe who have made their Lives bitter by unneceſſary Burthens, and putting into their Places, others brought under voluntary Obligations, to have many of theſe Grievances removed; ſhall there be none, ſhall there be only a few found, who have

Virtue

Virtue enough boldly to ſtand forth, and avail themſelves of this *conſtitutional* Opportunity of aſſerting the Cauſe of themſelves, and their injured Country?

Will ye, *Iſſachar* like, continue to couch down between many Burthens? Will ye tamely bow down your Shoulders to bear—and to be loaded with many unneceſſary Tributes impoſed upon you, by Men indebted at firſt for Power, and wholly dependent upon you for their Continuance in it?

Can your Landlords eſteem you for this unmanly Compliance? Muſt they not at Heart deſpiſe you, as Creatures leſs feeling than the Snail? Will they as a Recompence abate you one Farthing of your Rent? Or if your Leaſes were out, would they renew them a *ſix Pence* cheaper upon that Account? Yea will the Generality of them ſo much as thank you afterward, till perhaps they have the ſame Occaſion for your

Voices again? And tho' they ſhould, would ye purchaſe their Favours by a Sacrifice of your ineſtimable Privileges? I hope better Things of you---things which become the Sons of conſtitutional Freedom. Beſides,

Conſider with yourſelves whether thoſe Advantages may not be more than over-balanced by the Burthens laid on you, by theſe ſelfiſh Tools, of a ſelfiſh Adminiſtration? By the innumerable Taxes under which ye may quickly be made to groan, may ye not ſoon be made to pay too dear for thoſe Favors?

Perhaps ye will aſk [I know it will be often aſk'd you] "Where ſhall we get bet-"ter? Tho' we ſhould change, may we "not get as bad Repreſentatives,"

'Tis true we may get as bad.---But tho' we were ſuſpicious, yea tho' we were almoſt morally ſure that we ſhould, yet in many inſtances

Inſtances I think we ought to change. The Diſgrace of a TURN-OUT is as ſmall a Puniſhment as can well in Juſtice be inflicted, upon Men who have prov'd unfaithful to their Truſt. But farther,

We have had Demonſtration concerning many that are now in Place, that our Intereſt are by no Means ſafe in their Hands —to our coſt, we have found them to be unfit Truſtees for the Public. But we cannot have the ſame Certainty againſt thoſe who have never been tried----and Charity forbids us to condemn them *untried*, becauſe of the Tranſgreſſion of others. Let us therefore do our Duty---as becomes Men, attentive both to our own Intereſts, and thoſe of the Public; let us endeavour to turn out thoſe who have injured us, and put in others in their Place.—And if theſe diſcover the ſame venal Spirit, when the Time comes, let us ſerve them in the ſame Manner. Thus legally teſtifying our Diſ-

approbation

approbation of their Conduct; and, in a conſtitutional Manner, convincing them that we will not be bought and ſold by them, at pleaſure, with Impunity.---And if Electors, in faithfulneſs to themſelves, and their Country, would act in this ſpirited Manner, Repreſentatives would not dare to trifle with their Intereſts as they often do.

Burſt, Burſt then, my dear Friends, the ignoble Bands of *Cowardice*, and *miſtaken ſelf*----Aſſert your Right uncontrouled to vote for whom ye pleaſe---Make a ſtrict Enquiry into the parliamentary Conduct of thoſe who have been your Repreſentatives---Such as have acted an upright Part nobly ſupport----But ſuch as have rather *betrayed* than *defended* your Intereſts, with all your might oppoſe upon the enſuing Elections---Let Bribery and Venality be always ſtigmatiz'd by you.

And jealous leſt ye be taken by Surprize, need I adviſe you as ſoon as poſſible, to re-

giſter

giſter yourſelves as Freeholders, as the Law requires, that ſo ye may have it in your Power to ſerve yourſelves, your Country—— and your Children yet unborn. When the Chains of Deſpotiſm and Oppreſſion are forming, is it Time for you to ſleep?

That ye may awake to a Senſe of your important Truſt; that ye may behave like Men actuated by the Fear of God, and Regard to your Country; and that your future Choice of Men to repreſent us in Parliament may be prudent, is the *ſincere*, and *ardent* wiſh of

Gentlemen,

Your humble Servant,

A FREEHOLDER.

F I N I S.

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